

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1992

EPA Is Drilling For Samples Of Industrial Contaminants

By Robert Goodrich
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Drilling rigs are going up in Sauget, but they're not searching for Uncle Jed's Texas tea.

They're testing for poison.

An Illinois Environmental Protection Agency drilling crew pulled soil samples from as deep as 20 feet below the surface of Sauget Tuesday, checking for old industrial contaminants.

The site, near the village park on Ogden Avenue just north of Queeny Avenue, is one of 16 in the area being checked for pollution.

Millions of dollars are being spent to clean up some other sites, but J. Stanley Black, an analyst for the Illinois EPA, said no one knows whether this one, called "Site K," is polluted.

Agency officials suspect pollution because aerial photos from the early 1970s show the site was once a pond.

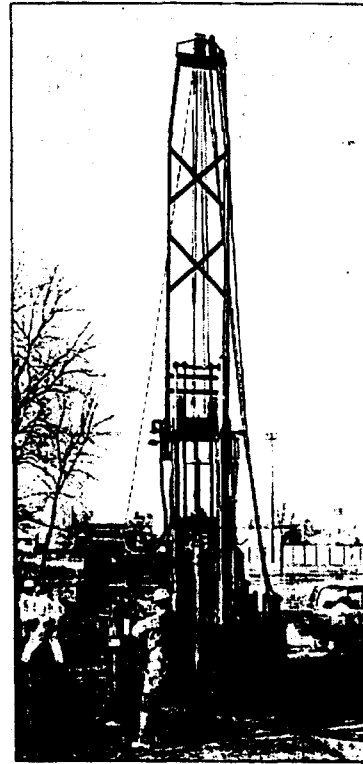
"We do know that the site was filled over a period of years," Black said. "Demolition debris may have been used as fill. If you've got a site in an industrial area, you never know what went in," he explained.

He passed out leaflets to neighboring residents to explain that the drilling and sampling were no cause for alarm or for avoiding the village park.

"The surface is not a matter of real concern," Black said. "We're looking deeper."

Mayor Paul Sauget dropped by as the crew punched a hole next to the park fence. In salty language, he declared the operation a waste of time and taxpayer's money.

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Scott Dine/Post-Dispatch
TOP: Illinois environmental technicians drilling for soil samples in Sauget. LEFT: Workers recording data. They are (left to right) Sheila Murphy, project manager, Sherry Oto, Kim Nika and Ken Corkill.

Drilling

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Unoffended, Black said he hoped that the mayor was correct in his belief that nothing harmful would be found. But he said it would be worth the cost of sampling to know that.

The drilling crew turned up nothing alarming in its first few drillings. The crew examined samples visually and with a hand-held monitor used to sniff for evidence of chemical solvents or petroleum products. More testing will be done in a laboratory, Black said.

Ground pollution would not necessarily mean there was illegal dumping or even carelessness, Black said.

For example, coal tar from old coal-

fired municipal utility plants was not considered a contaminant in the days when they were operating.

"Now, literally 100 years later, we're dealing with that legacy," Black said. Illinois is working to clean up 86 coal tar sites.

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) also were once thought harmless. Now, they are considered a likely cause of cancer.

Black said each of the 16 area sites being examined by the Illinois EPA would be worked on in stages.

Hazardous waste from local industries was dumped at a dozen sites on six segments of nearby Dead Creek,

beginning almost a century ago and continuing into the 1970s.

The Illinois EPA's primary concern is movement of contaminated ground water toward the Mississippi River.

Contaminants include heavy metals, chlorobenzene, pesticides, PCBs and dioxins.

Two years ago, Cerro Copper Products Co. agreed to spend \$12 million to remove about 25,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil from one segment of Dead Creek.

In March, Cerro Copper sued Monsanto Co. and one of its subsidiaries in U.S. District Court in East St. Louis for \$12.8 million.

The site is one of 16 in the area being checked for pollution.



State of Illinois

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mary A. Gade, Director

2200 Churchill Road, Springfield, IL 62794-9276

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF PLANNED ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING ACTIVITY
AT SAUGET "SITE K" ON DECEMBER 8 & 9, 1992
BY THE ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (IEPA)**

As a routine part of the ongoing investigation of possible environmental problem-sites in the Sauget and Cahokia area (known as the "Sauget Sites"), on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 8 & 9, 1992, a team of environmental specialists from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) will be collecting samples of soil from an area of Sauget, Illinois east of Falling Springs Road and north of a residential area on Queeny Avenue (known as "Site K" and "Yvonne Sauget Trust" in the Sauget Sites environmental investigation). (SEE ATTACHED MAP)

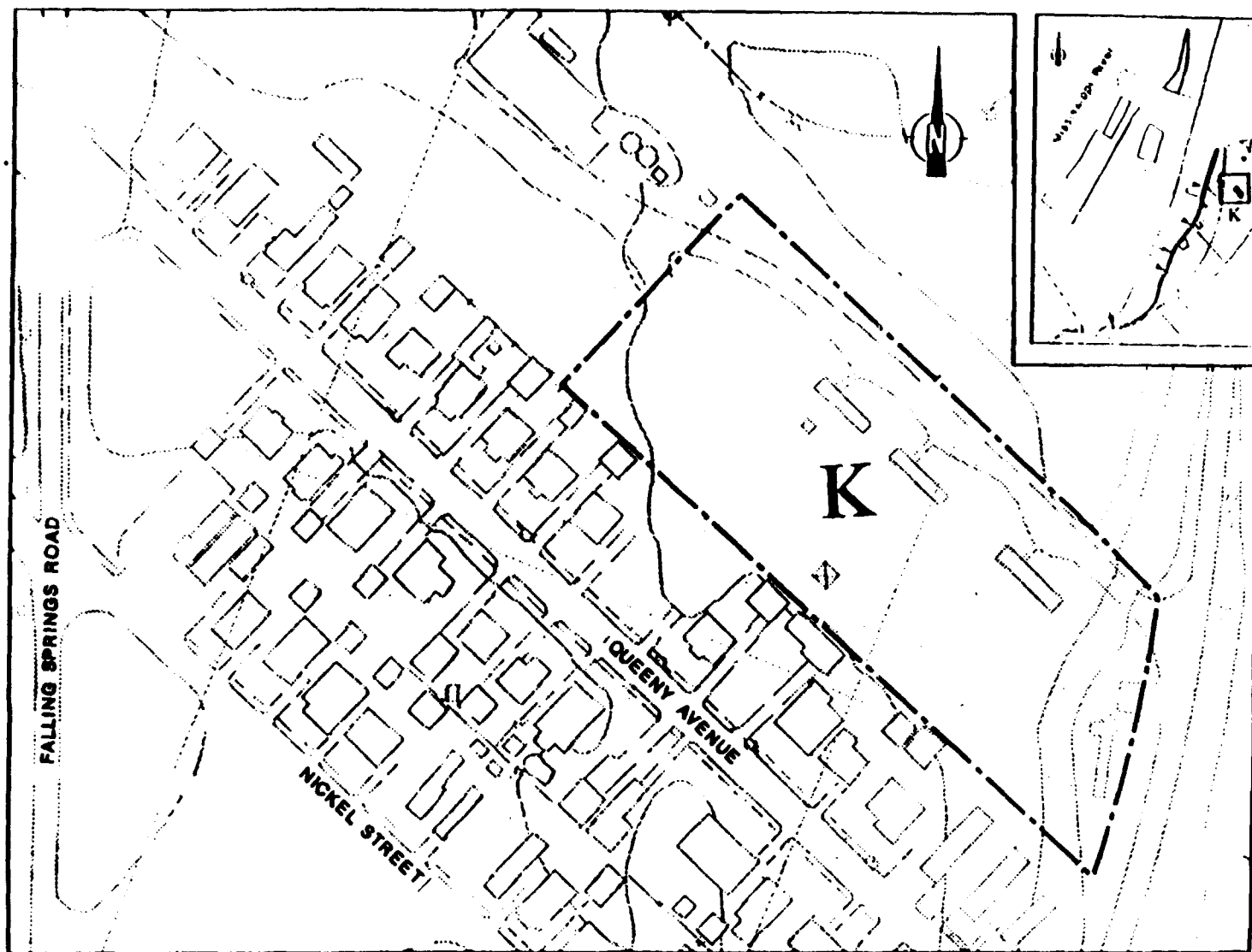
This long-planned follow-up site-investigation is expected to last two days, while the team collects samples of surface soils and an IEPA drill-rig collects samples from deeper soil-borings. This is the second look at Site K, following a 1988 IEPA study at the site, which suggested that some of the fill material deep beneath the present surface might contain some chemical contaminants. Since the 1988 study, 5 to 6 feet of fill material has been added to the site. The IEPA has no evidence at this time of any contamination of present surface soils at Site K.

IEPA is making this announcement in an effort to inform local officials, nearby residents, and local news bureaus of the planned sampling and to avoid misunderstandings when the sampling team appears at the site. Some of the sampling activities have a routine requirement that team members wear protective gear to avoid contact with possibly contaminated soils from below-ground. However, the required use of such gear by sampling-team members does not indicate any danger to the general public.

Any questions about the current sampling, or about other aspects of IEPA's environmental investigations of the Sauget Sites can be directed to:

**Stan Black
Office of Community Relations
Illinois E.P.A.
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276**

Phone: 217/785-1427



SOURCE: Ecology and Environment, Inc., 1988.

SCALE
0 100 200 300 400 500 FEET

FIGURE 2-7 SITE FEATURES MAP, SITE K